

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Headquarters

Washington, DC 20546-0001



September 7, 2006

Reply to Attn of:

General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance at 2006 Education Symposium
Sponsored by Education Technology Think Tank (ET3) and
Congressman Owens on September 8, 2006 in Washington, DC

On September 8, 2006, the Education Technology Think Tank (ET3) and Congressman Major R. Owens will sponsor an education symposium on the subject of "Education Partners: Ensuring America's Competitiveness." Congressman Owens is the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Education Braintrust and ET3 is a non-profit organization committed to harnessing technology and telecommunications for economic and educational empowerment of traditionally underserved communities. The purpose of the event is to highlight critical issues in education. People will be invited from a wide spectrum of government, the private sector, and institutions of higher learning. Attendees will discuss issues involving research, policy and practice in education and how to form partnerships to achieve educational goals. There will be a special emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. There will be informational exhibitions open to the public at which NASA will participate. NASA has participated in this Washington, DC event since 1999, focusing on meeting the need for STEM education to prepare students, who may become future NASA employees, to meet the challenges of space exploration. The event is not political and it is non-partisan.

There are three parts of the event. The first part is entitled "Innovate or Abdicat Our Competitive Edge" and involves a breakfast and policy forum. It will take place at the Rayburn House Office Building from 8 - 12 p.m. There will be approximately 300 people in attendance and the per person cost is around \$24.00. The second part is an afternoon keynote issue forum entitled "Education to Ensure our Nation's Security: Lessons from 9-11 and Katrina." This event will be held at the New Washington Convention Center from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Approximately 300 people have been invited to the event which will include a light lunch for the approximate per person cost of \$24.00. The third part involves an afternoon exhibit fair and evening legacy awards dinner at the National Education Association (NEA) Headquarters from 4:00 to 10:00 p.m. NASA will offer an education exhibit and an astronaut to work with children. NASA's Deputy Administrator, Shana Dale, will receive the "Women in the Pipeline" leadership award at the awards ceremony. Around 400 people from educational institutions, the Federal government, and the private sector will attend the dinner and awards ceremony which is valued at \$50.00 per person, and sponsored by the NEA.

I find that the events at this one day education symposium and its associated refreshments meet the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 CFR § 2635.204(g). These events will be widely-attended by people from the Federal government, educational institutions, the private sector, and the public who are interested in education. There is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend because there will be emphasis on education in science, technology, engineering, and math skills necessary for future space exploration. Consequently, I conclude that NASA's interest in its employees attending this event outweighs any concern that such free attendance may, or may appear to, improperly influence any NASA personnel in the performance of their official duties.

Accordingly, NASA personnel and their spouses or guests, if invited, may attend this September 8th event without charge.



R. Andrew Falcon